



# Facilities and Lands

## Chapter 4

Buying, planning, and managing land, buildings, boat ramps, and other recreational facilities so all citizens can enjoy Wisconsin's beauty and outdoor recreation.

The Fish & Wildlife Account pays for \$9 million or 18 percent of the \$50.1 million facilities and lands program and 52 of its 117 positions.

The remaining 65 positions and \$41.1 million are provided through the Conservation Fund, General Tax Funds, Environmental Fund, Recycling Fund, Petroleum Storage Cleanup Fund, Clean Water Fund as well as the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund and Federal Grants.

### Where does your Fish & Wildlife money go?

Acquire public land for hunting fishing and boating access sites

Plan for public use of lands and facilities

Manage and maintain DNR lands

Design and build recreational and public use facilities

### How is the Facilities and Lands program funded?

Funding Source	\$ (in millions)	%
Fish & Wildlife Account	9.0	18
Rest of Conservation Fund	21.1	42
General Tax Fund	17.7	36
Environmental Fund	1.3	2
Recycling Fund	0.2	<1
Petroleum Storage Cleanup Fund	0.5	1
Clean Water Fund	0.3	1
Total	50.1	100

### What was accomplished with your money in 2003–2004?

**Acquire land:** In 2003–04, we purchased 18,381 acres and secured easements on an additional 2,777 acres of land for a total cost of \$36 million. These purchases included large additions to properties such as Jefferson Marsh Wildlife Area, Lake Mills Wildlife Area and the Rainbow Flowage. This brings the department's ownership to over 1.4 million acres with about 90 percent of the land open for hunting, fishing and related recreational access.

**Plan for public use of lands and facilities:** We work with citizens to develop "master plans" that identify activities allowed on certain properties -- from building roads and parking areas to managing wildlife habitat and timber -- and what the land will look like 10, 20 and 30 years down the road.

In 2003-04, we completed studies for the development and expansion of Harrington Beach and Tommy G. Thompson state parks, Central Wisconsin Grasslands Conservation Area, White River Fisheries Area in Bayfield County, and the Crex Meadows/Governor Knowles State Forest expansion and a special Land Legacy Implementation Strategy to help identify land acquisition and facility priorities that could be financed through Wisconsin's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund. We also continued master planning efforts for the Lower Wolf River Bottoms and the Northern Highlands/American Legion State Forest, Rib Mountain, Capitol Springs and Buckhorn state parks, Military Ridge Heritage Trail, Lower Black River Natural Resource Area, and Jefferson County Conservation and Recreation Area.

**Manage and maintain department lands:**

Ensuring that people have a safe, enjoyable experience on public conservation and recreation lands requires a lot of behind-the-scenes work. Tasks range from maintaining parking lots, roads, bridges, and campgrounds to sampling well water, managing portable-toilet contracts, assuring access to facilities for people with disabilities and enforcing regulations on properties.

We are responsible for developing basic management policies and procedures for all

department properties, including the 1 million acres that make up the state's wildlife and fishery areas. Our facilities and lands staff manages the land on 152 Fishery Areas, several major flowages and river ways, and hundreds of DNR-owned public boat access sites.

**Design and build recreational facilities:**

People need roads, parking lots, trails, boat launches and restrooms to enjoy department-owned land. We work with other state agencies and with consultants and contractors to facilitate the design and construction of these structures. In 2003–04, we took 330 projects through the budget and design process and oversaw construction on a similar number of projects, including 21 new boat access projects.

## Budget reductions in 2003-2004

To reduce spending, the Facilities and Lands program stopped posting boundaries and maintaining roads on public lands.

## Where are we going in 2004-2005?

We are anticipating reductions in our 2005-2007 budget: the loss of 1.6 full time staff, less in road and building development dollars and in operations. This means we will not complete or we will defer some road and building improvements and land maintenance activities.

However, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund remains fully funded and allows us to continue to acquire land for the public's use and benefit, and make grants to local governments for conservation purposes.

**Land acquisitions:** Acquire 15,000-plus acres across the state, many within fishery or wildlife areas.

**Construction projects:** Complete work on approved 2003–2005 capital development budget projects. This means we expect to complete about 300 development projects, including 25 boat access site renovations and new developments.

**Property planning:** The Lower Wolf River Bottomlands master planning will be continued. We expect to complete master plans for Northern Highland/American Legion State Forest, Capitol Springs, Rib Mountain and Buckhorn state parks. We will be continuing preparatory planning work for the Black River and Peshtigo River state forests.

The department will continue implementing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, which was reauthorized in 2000 and has \$60 million a year approved through the state budget process. This funding will help offset higher acquisition and development costs caused by rising land prices, and ensure the department's ability to obtain and develop significant properties for public enjoyment and natural resource protection.